

SCHOOL FACILITIES INITIATIVE TASK FORCE
THURSDAY, APRIL 14, 2016 – 6:30 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX, COMMUNITY ROOM 1

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Ackerman, Beaulieu, Bresnahan (6:39 p.m.), Dauphinais, de la Cruz (6:55 p.m.),
DeMatto, Doyle, Greenleaf (7:00 p.m.), Heller, Massett (7:00 p.m.), Somers,
Trejo
Staff: Oefinger, Graner, Kilpatrick, Bresnahan
Consultant: Mike Zuba

Chairman Heller called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – March 3, 2016

At the beginning of the meeting, there was no quorum present. At 7:05 p.m. and after a quorum was declared this item was considered.

A motion was made by Trejo, seconded by Dauphinais to approve the minutes of March 3, 2016 as written.

The motion carried 11 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstention (Masset).

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS - None

IV. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

- a. Housekeeping Items - None
- b. Update on Meeting with State Department of Construction Services (DCS)

Mr. Zuba distributed the final report to the Task Force (without appendices). He stated that the Task Force has completed its charge of delivering a plan to the Town Council and this will be the final meeting of the Task Force. Town staff and the consultant have spent time meeting with the state on the special legislation. Mr. Zuba provided an update on the discussions with the Department of Construction Services and reviewed the process going forward. The special legislation is designed to grant Groton priority status for three schools. It is Groton's responsibility to obtain referendum approval and not ask the state for any additional funding.

Bresnahan arrived at 6:39 p.m.

Current cost estimates use the 2016-17 reimbursement rate, which is 3% higher than 2015-16 and makes the delta for the state lower. Groton's request will be added to the overall school construction bill along with requests from other towns.

Representative John Scott arrived at 6:45 p.m. He updated the task force on budget negotiations, noting that school construction programs appear to be safe.

Somers asked about the impact of the reduced school impact aid and potential tax increases on the ability to sell the project. Discussion followed on potential costs savings associated with the plan, including reduction of instructional staff.

de la Cruz arrived at 6:55 p.m. and a quorum was declared. Greenleaf and Massett arrived at 7:00 p.m.

Discussion followed on ways to sell the project and assure that the referendum passes. Salient points include economic development impacts, the cost of “do nothing,” efficiencies, and the ability to decrease the budget under MBR if there are cost savings. Discussion followed on the uniqueness of Groton and how it is impacted by the ECS formula.

Dauphinais noted the need to show the Town’s debt service and how other debt will be declining over time. She asked if a reference to the local cost could be included in the language of the bond referendum which must be approved for the entire cost of the project.

c. School Facilities Initiative Task Force Wrap Up and Conclusion

Heller noted that it is the role of a PAC to frame the message and sell the program and he announced that the PAC will be headed up by Lenny Winkler and Jim Mitchell.

Heller thanked legislators, consultants, staff, and Task Force members for their contributions over the 3½ year effort. Task Force members thanked Heller for his chairmanship.

Trejo asked Somers to write an op-ed for The Day about the creation of the SFITF, the collaborative process, and final product.

It was noted that the full report with appendices will be available for download from the Town’s web site.

A motion was made by Trejo, seconded by Beaulieu, to accept the Groton 2020 Plan Summary Report.

The motion carried unanimously.

Oefinger noted that the Council has authorized preparation of the bond ordinance. The next step is to introduce the ordinance and schedule a public hearing. He emphasizes that Groton’s leaders must present a united front and offer constant encouragement and positivity about the plan.

Discussion followed on ways to bring elected officials and the City of Groton on board.

V. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Ackerman, seconded by Somers, to adjourn the meeting at 7:42 p.m.

The motion carried unanimously.